

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application, as amended:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 6 wherein the lid comprises a rigid cover having a rim configured to surround the photomask and a seal defining the interface surface extending from the rim.
3. (Previously presented) The system of claim 6 wherein the lid comprises a rigid cover, a rim depending from the cover that defines a recess, an end surface around the rim, a groove in the end surface, and a seal in the groove, and wherein the seal defines an interface surface that contacts the plate.
4. (Previously presented) The system of claim 6 wherein the lid comprises a rigid cover, an edge surface around the cover, a groove in the edge surface, and a seal in the groove, and wherein the seal defines an interface surface that contacts the pellicle frame.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Previously presented) A system for cleaning a reticle used in photolithographic processing of microelectronic workpieces, the reticle including a plate with a photomask and a pellicle frame around the photomask, wherein the system comprises:
  - a fixture configured to carry the plate;
  - a lid spaced apart from the fixture, wherein the lid has an interface surface configured to seal against at least one of the plate and/or the pellicle frame;

at least one fluid dispenser configured to dispense a fluid onto the pellicle frame;  
and  
a clamping assembly to press the interface surface against the plate.

7-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously presented) A system for cleaning a reticle used in photolithographic processing of microelectronic workpieces, the reticle including a plate with a photomask and a pellicle frame around the photomask, wherein the system comprises:

a holder configured to carry the reticle;  
a lid spaced apart from the holder, the lid having an interface surface configured to fit within the pellicle frame to form a barrier between the photomask and the pellicle frame; and  
at least one fluid dispenser configured to direct a fluid onto the pellicle frame.

16. (Previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the lid comprises a rigid cover, a rim depending from the cover that defines a recess, an end surface around the rim, a groove in the end surface, and a seal in the groove, and wherein the rim is configured to fit within the pellicle frame and the seal defines an interface surface that contacts the plate.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein:  
the lid comprises a rigid cover, a rim depending from the cover that defines a recess, an end surface around the rim, a groove in the end surface, and a seal in the groove, and wherein the seal defines an interface surface that contacts the plate; and

the system further comprises a clamping assembly to press the interface surface against the plate.

19-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Original) In the fabrication of microelectronic devices, a method for cleaning a reticle comprising:

mounting the reticle to a holder;

disposing a cover relative to the reticle to form a fluid barrier between a photomask in the reticle and a pellicle frame around the photomask; and

dispensing a cleaning fluid onto the pellicle frame.

45. (Original) The method of claim 44, further comprising sealing the photomask to the cover, the cover including a rigid rim and a seal extending from the rim.

46. (Original) The method of claim 45, wherein sealing includes defining an interface surface between the reticle and the seal, the seal being in a groove of an end surface around the rigid rim of the cover, the cover defining a recess.

47. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 44, wherein disposing includes defining an interface surface between the pellicle frame and a seal, the seal being in a groove, the groove being in an edge surface, and the edge surface being of a rigid rim of the cover.

48. (Cancelled)

49. (Original) The method of claim 44, wherein disposing includes clamping the cover to the reticle.

50. (Cancelled)

51. (Original) The method of claim 44, wherein disposing includes defining an interface surface between the reticle and a seal, the seal being in a groove of an end surface around a rigid rim of the cover, the cover defining a recess; and further comprising clamping the cover to the reticle.

52-58. (Cancelled)

59. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 57,~~ A system for protecting a photomask area of a reticle, comprising:

means for carrying the reticle, the reticle having a surface, wherein a pellicle frame is attached to the surface defining the photomask area;

means for forming a barrier between the photomask area and the pellicle frame;

and

means for dispensing at least one fluid onto the reticle;

wherein the barrier means includes a cover sealed to the reticle in a manner that prevents the fluid from contacting the photomask area.